

## Editorial

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Welcome to Volume 3, Issue No 1 of the Tuning Journal for Higher Education. This volume is the first one issued by a new Editorial Team, right after two remarkable years, during which the first four issues of the Journal were edited. It was a long held ambition of the Tuning Academy that the worldwide Tuning community should have a ‘voice’ in the form of an academic publication. Two years preparatory work went into establishing this ‘voice’ to the highest possible standards before the first issue was published in November 2013.

The support of the Universities of Deusto and Groningen was crucial in establishing funding and an editorial office. The wisdom of Julia Gonzalez, Robert Wagenaar, and Pablo Beneitone was key to establishing the Journal’s aims, Managing, Editorial and Advisory Editorial Boards. The Managing Editor, Ladislav Bizimana Kayinamura, ensured the highest possible ethical and production standards and co-authored the web page and the extensive supporting documentation. Nothing would have been published without the hard work of the Editorial Board and Board of Advisory Editors. To all of them go heartfelt thanks.

We can rightly say that the Journal “was created” in these four years. The Founding Editor Prof. Paul D. Ryan played a great role, cooperating with the Editorial Board for the Journal policies, preparing the TJHE Ethical Guidelines for Publication, the guidelines for authors, setting up standards and procedures for the review process. Under his wise guidance, the TJHE achieved high editorial performances, proposing itself as a natural host to good research findings on student centred, competence and learning outcomes based reforms of higher education programmes. The by now large Tuning Community as well as many others have a precious and well working communication tool, with its own specificity in the wide landscape of educational journals. As new editors, we gratefully rely on the great experience of these founding years and, on behalf of the Editorial Board, we

confirm the continuity of the journal policies, regarding in particular open access (no individual charges for submission and access) and a continuing effort in order to qualify for ISI registration.

Moreover, we confirm that the greatest credit must go to our contributors and readers in whose hands lies the future of the Journal. Please continue to contribute, circulate, cite, comment and debate. We invite, again on behalf of the Editorial Board, submissions from “*all those working to improve the quality, transparency, transferability and relevance of higher education programmes and who wish to share their experience with the global community via the pages of this journal.*”<sup>1</sup>

The present issue did not ask in advance for focused contributions. Nevertheless, a possible *ex post* focus might very well be “ordinary life of the Tuning Community” or even better “growing Tuning seeds”.

There has long been a debate as to what effect the ‘Bologna style’ reforms have had upon global higher education. The first two articles underwent the review process under Paul D. Ryan, as Guest Editor, in the respect of the TJHE Ethical Guidelines for Publication, and, according to him, they provide exciting new insights.

Anna Serbati reports on the results of in depth interviews with experienced academics as to the effect of the various Tuning projects around the world on innovation in teaching and learning within their system. After analysing case-studies, she concludes that such projects have not only promoted a wider understanding of the concept and practice of competence-based higher education, but that they have promoted wider communication in this field. Suggestions and rooms for improvement of the Tuning methodology are also provided in the discussion.

The article by Luigi F. Donà dalle Rose discusses the impressive database on some 1500 Erasmus exchanges to and from the University of Padova. This analysis shows clearly how students have developed as a result of these exchanges and gives insights into how such development is affected by a student’s ‘culture’. The principle measure used in this article is which five of the thirty *Tuning EU* generic competences did the students attach importance to at the end of their visit. This allows rich analysis of how and perhaps why the students have developed those competences over their stay.

The contribution by Kees Kouwenaar touches upon the delicate step of assessing generic competences of students willing to enroll in master’s programmes. His article describes in depth the rationale of the dedicated Mastermind Europe project and it offers much more theoretical and

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan, Paul R., “Editorial,” *Tuning Journal for Higher Education* 1, no. 1 (2013): 13.

background information than the available documents on the project website. It also reports the first outcomes of the project (not published earlier), which may represent useful tools for academic, especially directors of master's programmes, to switch from an admission decision based on recognition of a diploma to a proper assessment of the applicants' competences.

The contribution by Darla Deardorff opens to a new relevant aspect for the Tuning Academy: the intercultural competence. With the growing diversity in the world today, beyond national diversity, intercultural competence cuts across disciplines, subjects, and contexts. The Author proposes a research-based definition and interpretative framework of intercultural competence, clarifying the terminology, and she opens a reflection on possible ways to embed intercultural competence into Tuning Frameworks around the world.

The last two articles have a geographical flavor. In a way, they link up with the first contribution by Serbati, closing the circle of the "growing Tuning seeds".

The contribution by Artur Demchuk, Yevgeniya Karavaeva, Yelena Kovtun, and Svetlana Rodionova focuses on the use of Tuning methodology in Russian context, with particular reference to the topic of assessment. Authors deepen the correlation of competencies, learning outcomes and the methods of their assessment, by proposing an algorithm developed by the experts of Association of Classical Universities of Russia. Two undergraduate programmes in Philology and Psychology are discussed as examples of this implementation.

The contribution by Pablo Beneitone and Maria Yarosh offers the first results of a large scale study promoted by DITA-Deusto International Tuning Academy about the impact on higher education of Tuning projects in different world's regions. The article describes the methodological tool used in the study and reports the findings of a two-phase detailed survey, covering both institutions, which participated earlier on in Tuning LA, and individuals from those same institutions (academic executives, teachers and students). The survey obtained a high level of response, a first strong indication of long-term Tuning impact, and the collected data allow detailed assessment of such an impact in three different domains.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge Paul D. Ryan's wishes for every success as new editors. We shall truly try our best!